



2000 California Boating Safety Report

State of California
The Resources Agency

**Department of
Boating and Waterways**

Gray Davis, Governor
State of California

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DEPARTMENT OF BOATING AND WATERWAYS

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May 2001

Dear Boating Enthusiast:

California ranks second nationally in the number of recreational vessels. As crowded waterways lead to an increased chance of accidents, it is not surprising that California ranks second in the number of boating accidents and first in the number of boating fatalities. Because of this, it is important to supply the boating public with the best information possible to enhance safety on the water.

A primary focus of this publication is the analysis of boating accidents that occurred in 2000. This information is compiled to help us direct our efforts to reduce the number of boating accidents, injuries and fatalities on California's waterways. Continuing to provide education to anglers is a priority for the Department, as 49% of boating fatalities in 2000 occurred during fishing-related activities. An analysis of all alcohol-related fatal boating accidents reveals that 2/3 of victims were intoxicated passengers who either were responsible for or contributed to their own deaths. The Department continues to stress that the "designated operator" concept does not go far enough and recommends that no one aboard a vessel consume alcoholic beverages.

In 2000, the Department sponsored legislation (AB 2538 – Brewer) that requires persons under 12 years of age to wear life jackets in vessels 26 feet or less while underway. AB 2538 also requires persons on personal watercraft and persons being towed behind a vessel to wear lifejackets, with exceptions. The bill successfully passed the Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Davis. AB 2538's effective date was January 1, 2001.

The report also includes information about the Department's efforts to promote boating safety through law enforcement and safety education programs which involve essential, direct interaction with the boating community.

This report is also available on the Department's website, www.dbw.ca.gov. For more information about this or other accident statistics, please contact Amy Rigby by telephone at (916) 263-8190 or by e-mail: arigby@dbw.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raynor T. Tsuneyoshi'.

Raynor T. Tsuneyoshi
Director



Glossary of Terms

At Anchor

Held in place in the water by an anchor; includes “moored” to a buoy or anchored vessel, and “dragging anchor.”

Cabin Motorboat

Motorboat with a cabin that can be completely closed by means of doors or hatches.

Capsizing

Overturning of a vessel. The bottom must become uppermost, except in the case of a sailboat, which may lie.

Collision with Fixed Object

The striking by a vessel of any stationary object, above or below the surface of the water.

Collision with Floating Object

Collision with any waterborne object above or below the surface of the water.

Cruising

Proceeding normally, unrestricted, with an absence of drastic rudder or engine changes.

Drifting

Under way, but proceeding without use of engines, oars, or sails; carried along only by current, or wind.

Excessive Speed

Operating at a speed that is not reasonable, prudent, or legal considering the circumstances.

Fire/Explosion (Fuel)

Accidental combustion of vessel fuel or liquids, including their vapors.

Flooding/Swamping

Filling with water, but retaining sufficient buoyancy to remain on the surface.

Grounding

The running aground of a vessel; striking or pounding on the rocks, reefs, or shoals.

Improper Lookout

No proper watch; the failure of an operator to perceive danger because no one was serving as a lookout, or the person so serving failed to do so. *(For purposes of this report, this term refers only to accidents where the ski observers were not present or failed to do their job, or sailboat accidents where a lookout was not posted or failed to perceive danger. All other accidents involving inattentive operators fall under “Operator Inattention.”)*

Maneuvering

Changing course, speed, or both during which a high degree of alertness is required.

Open Motorboat

Craft of open construction specifically built for operating with a motor, including boats canopied or fitted with temporary partial shelters.

Personal Flotation Device (PFD)

Commonly known as a life jacket or life saving device, a PFD can be a jacket, vest, cushion, or ring buoy designed to serve as a lifesaving aid.

Personal Watercraft (PWC)

A small vessel that uses an internal combustion engine powering a jet pump or propeller. It is designed to carry from one to four persons, and to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the vessel rather than in the conventional manner of sitting or standing inside the vessel.

Rules of the Road

Statutory and regulatory rules governing the navigation of vessels.

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